

The image shows the front cover of a book. The main part of the cover is decorated with a traditional marbled paper pattern, often called a 'stone' or 'shell' pattern, featuring large, irregular, dark blue-grey shapes with lighter, speckled centers, separated by thin, dark red veins. To the left of this marbled area is a vertical strip of gold-colored material, likely leather or a gold-leafed cloth, which forms the spine of the book. In the bottom-left corner, there is a small white rectangular label with the number '5424.93' printed in black. Below this white label is a red rectangular label with the words 'Research Library' printed in white, bold, sans-serif font.

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THE  
AMERICAN EVANGELIST.

"PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE."

VOL. I.

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No. 2.

SERMON II.

BY THE REV. LEONARD WITHINGTON OF NEWBURY, MASS.

THE EXCELLENCE OF THE SCRIPTURES.

PSALM XIX: 7, 8, 9, 10.

*The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey, and the honey-comb*

THE objects of nature have always been delightful to people of taste; and it is pretended by some enthusiasts that they have a moral influence. It is supposed that the heart is purified by looking at even the inanimate works of God. The society of man is corrupting. Vice is found in cities. No one can mingle with the crowd without either injuring his character, or impairing his peace. But the society of nature is friendly to the purest virtue; and she makes solitude a monitor of devotion. A walk amidst venerable trees; a survey of the starry sky; a view of the ocean; a sight of the rising or setting sun; green fields—wild rocks—soft

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streams, all serve to hush the passions and tranquilize the heart—so poetry and declamation have said. Is it so ?

No—it is not altogether so. The scenery of nature impresses us according as we interpret it. It may indeed lead us to God ; and communion with God is always beneficial. But it may suggest a very different train of reflections.—The object we look at, is the image from which we take the hint ; but the use we make of that hint depends on the temper of the mind. Could we walk over the beauties of creation, or under the pendant sublimities of the sky, with the disposition of the Psalmist, we should certainly receive instruction. But to reach this instruction, previous faith is necessary. The operations of nature are the movements of a telegraph ; and a book is necessary to explain the signals. We must look on the world as God's workmanship ; we must view all things as manifestations of him. A view of nature has a tendency to make a good man better ; but no efficacy in making a bad man good. There are minds, and susceptible minds, to whom the leaves of the loveliest rose, or the strong voice of the thunder, bear no memorial of the beauty or the majesty of God. Nature is a dark text ; we must read it with a commentary. That commentary is the inspired word. When we have heard God from Sinai, we may see him among the stars.

It seems to be the object of David, in the Psalm from which our text is taken, to blend natural and revealed religion together:—to shew that they are both manifestations of Jehovah ; but that revealed religion is infinitely the most clear, powerful and sweet. He

begins by observing that God is seen even in his inanimate works. *The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.* In the next verse, our translators have endeavored to improve on their original; and to give us not only a translation, but a commentary too. But nothing can be more tasteless. If we drop the italic words, supplied by the translators, it will read thus:—*no speech nor language; their voice is not heard.* The meaning is—the heavens, the rising and the setting sun speak, though with no literal voice. There is a silent eloquence with which they display the glory of God; a voice heard by the intellectual ear, and felt by the pious mind. A poet's conceptions are best caught by a poet; and Mr. Addison has expressed the thought exactly in these beautiful lines:—

What tho' no real voice or sound  
Amidst their radiant orbs is found;  
What tho', in solemn silence, all  
Move round our dark terrestrial ball;  
In reason's ear they all rejoice,  
And utter forth a glorious voice;  
Forever singing as they shine,—  
*The hand that made us is divine.*

After revolving this thought through the sixth verse, the Psalmist makes a sudden transition, but very beautiful, to the divine word. Conscious that it was the same sublime Jehovah, who built the heavens and taught the prophets, he considers his goodness as more largely displayed in the written record. It is a vain criticism, which would make the seventh verse the beginning of another Psalm, because a new subject

is introduced. Such transitions constitute the very beauty of ancient poetry. *The law of Jehovah is perfect*—that is—not partial like the instructions of nature, but teaching all our duty and therefore *converting the soul*. *The testimony of Jehovah is sure; making wise the simple*—that is—Revelation is easily understood and therefore level to the humblest minds. *The statutes; the commandments; the judgments of Jehovah* are all different phrases to express the divine oracles, so far as they were then given. The Psalmist concludes the period by comparing the word of God to gold and honey—two substances, which the avarice or the luxury of man most desires. It is more precious than gold; it is sweeter than honey. The good love God; obedience is the effect of love; and the Bible teaches them to obey. The book is now complete. It reveals a Saviour; it speaks of the cross, and the Heaven it purchased. It is able through faith to make us wise unto salvation. The sun shines on with the same lustre with which he rose upon the Psalmist. The heavens declare the glory of God, in the same mute language with which they formerly spake. But revelation, notwithstanding its original greatness, has been rising in importance, until the cross has displayed the glory of God's infinite Son.

Precious Bible! I then turn to thee. Thou art God's last, best gift. Here his character shines in lines which the most superficial need not mistake, nor the most careless confound. It is a brighter sun, sufficient to guide in every path of duty, never rising but once on the mind; and, when once risen, never going down.



The Bible is precious inasmuch as it gives us instruction; the most important instruction on subjects the most essential to our happiness; intelligible instruction; and instruction which helps to make knowledge efficacious.

Man is a lover of knowledge; but he is of yesterday and knows comparatively nothing. His eye surveys a little circle and his experience is confined to a narrow span. He knows not himself; he knows not human life; he knows not the properties of a single flower of the field; and what can he know of the infinite God? The nature of God is an ocean. Man walks to the shores of that ocean, and sees a fog overstretching it. He can neither fix its limits nor explore its bottom. The deepest darkness rolls before his eyes; and the more he thinks, the greater is his confusion. Let me forget my Bible, and take my stand on the very throne of natural religion—in the midst of nature, when she collects her brightest beauties and wears her loveliest dress. It is calm; the sun is sinking to the west; the red clouds are reflecting his beams. The sea is on my right hand and the land on my left. It is Autumn; and the breath of some gentle spirit seems to have tranquilized the universe. And now let me read this vast book of knowledge. Tell me, O Sun! did some superior One roll together thy beams and make thy light an emblem of his goodness and an evidence of his power? Was there ever a moment in which God said *let there be light, and there was light*? But the sun passes on in silence, imparts no intellectual ray from his brightness, retires behind the hills, and darkness follows. Tell me, O Sea! did

some Divine Hand heap thy waters together and hollow out the depths in which thy waves tumble and foam? The sea answers me not; the waves roll on as in contempt of my conjectures and aggravation of my doubts. Tell me, ye fields! ye rivers! ye precipices! ye mountains of the earth and ye stars of the sky!—Is there a God?—What is his character?—Where does he dwell?—An imperfect voice indeed whispers that these productions are the effect of wise design. They are manifestations of knowledge—manifestations of power—manifestations of goodness—manifestations of God. But the conviction wants effect. The medium of vision is too obscure and the object is too remote—I am mazed in the wide subject. I distrust not nature but I distrust my own faculties. Some clearer instruction must be given me; and it is by faith only that I learn effectually that, *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

The nature of God may be a subject merely of deep speculation. So it was considered by the ancient philosophers. But the Bible deduces from the character of God inferences of the greatest importance. He has not only *made* but he *governs* the world. He is holy, wise, just, benevolent, unchangeable and true in all his words and works. *He is a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of those that hate him, and shewing mercy unto thousands of those that love him, and keep his commandments.* He has established a law which man has broken. He has provided salvation for lost sinners. He has written to them a description of their character and his own. He

has loved the world even in its ruin, and given his Son to die on the cross for our redemption. This great transaction, the original glory of that Saviour who was in the *form of God*—who was *the Word, in the beginning with God, and was God*—by whom all things were made, and without whom was nothing made that is made—his condescension in taking the *form of a servant*; his humble birth in Bethlehem; his lowly yet benevolent life; his patient endurance of contradiction from sinners; his meekness when reviled; his perseverance when opposed; his diligence in doing good; his submission to his father's will; his agony when he prayed for sinners, and his death on the cross—all these things are related in the Bible. Whatever is precious in Christ and his love, tends to make this book precious. It was inspired by his Spirit, was written by his servants, records his wonderful actions, and is spoken to those whom he died to redeem. When Augustine read the works of Cicero he commended them for their eloquence; but “they are not sweet,” said he, “for the name of Jesus is not there.” The name of Jesus—the works of Jesus—the love of Jesus fill every page of the Bible. The Old Testament looked forward to the Gospel day, and the New Testament was written by men who determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified. If the most powerful interests can excite you—the clearest truths strike you—the strongest arguments convince, or the amplest instructions satisfy—you will prize your Bible; you will enlighten reason by faith; and yield the pride of knowledge to the humble happiness of being taught of God.

These are deep subjects, but the Bible makes them plain. Some of its truths are indeed involved with mysteries which no explanation can remove and no finite mind ever (probably) comprehend. But the practical lesson is always obvious, and the mystery we must receive on trust. The great truths of the Bible are intelligible in their bearing ; and no long-drawn deduction is necessary to make them bear on the heart. They are presented as objects of faith ; they are revealed in the simplest language ; are illustrated by the most obvious comparisons ; and are level to the humblest minds. *Unrenewed man is the enemy of God.\** How many practical consequences flow from this single truth ! If so, then we should feel a sorrow corresponding to our guilt. Then we should be deeply humble. Then we should prize the Saviour who expiates sin, and calls the guilty to repentance ; we should feel the danger of continuing in this dreadful state ; and not hope for future happiness without a radical change in the affections of the heart.—Then the justice of God appears, in preparing eternal punishment for all who continue in their rebellion ; and the heart, whose attention is turned on its own demerits, ceases to wonder at the severity of God ; and sees how his justice is reconcilable with his fatherly love. He is not cruel, but man is guilty ; and the interests of his wide government require, his care for a holy universe requires, that all, who will not bow to his gospel, should meet the sentence of a law, which punishes only to protect. The very trials of life, in the light of this truth, assume a new aspect. They are lighter

\* Romans, viii. 7.



than our sins, and therefore proofs of the mercy of a hand, which punishes with a gentleness which we do not deserve. All murmuring ceases. The heart becomes reconciled to the dispensations of providence. Thus a single truth sheds a light over the character of God; the darkness of providence; and the duties of life. As no man ever saw a lamp lighted at night without knowing what to do with it, so no one ever felt the impression of a truth from revelation without knowing how to apply it. These truths bring their own explanation. They are a light to our feet and a lamp to our paths.

Some doctrines, taken from the schools of philosophy, the inventions of man's wisdom, or the mistakes of his folly, find us passive and leave us so. They are heard with curiosity and without effect. The truths of the Bible are all directions; they explain man's condition and point him to his duty.

These truths are connected with the most beautiful precepts; simple; plain; flowing without art; calculated to touch the conscience; the language of a father to a wayward child.—*My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.*—How beautiful! how comprehensive! how affectionate! Do all the splendid pages of moral declamation afford any thing more to the purpose? Eloquence amuses but simplicity persuades. The Bible is addressed to the whole man; to the head and to the heart; and without the shew of eloquence, it has the best eloquence;—the eloquence which leaves you thinking only on the subject. When the Bible gives precepts on the most momentous point—what the sinner shall do to find acceptance with God—there

is a fearful simplicity. *Wash ye, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Repent. Believe the gospel.* In such cases there is nothing for man to do but to hear and obey.

The clearness of the scriptures likewise surpasses all other instruction, as much as the light of the sun surpasses the glare of the street-lamps, which are designed imperfectly to supply his place. The Bible after all the abatements of translation, antiquity, changing manners and obscure allusions, is in its essentials, a wonderfully perspicuous book. For though men have attempted to make its doctrines more clear in their symbols, yet they have rather satisfied the metaphysical mind than the practical christian. For impressions on the heart and for application to life the Bible, after all is most plain. It splits no hairs; but it gives you truth just in the connexion and just for the purpose you want it. For example; a system-maker may believe that he has made the divinity of Christ more clear, when he has divided his nature from his person, and proved him one with the Father, in nature, but twain as to his person. But for what purpose is it more clear? For the purpose of speculation, or for the purpose of eluding the weapons of a pressing enemy. At this point the perspicuity of his creed begins and ends. But St. Paul is perspicuous for a very different purpose. From the example of Christ he wishes to teach his disciples to condescend to the humblest offices of christian benevolence—to think no hovel too low for

them to enter and no character too vile for them to rescue from destruction. *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus ; who being in the form of God, held not tenaciously the dignity of being equal with God ; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men ; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.* O blessed Jesus ! thus ever let me see thy Godhead applied. Here is the doctrine and its use ; and the connexion perfectly obvious. Omitting all subtleties, the Apostle adduces the broad fact, and leaves it to its impression. He has no time for any other discussion, than to teach men to be more alive as Christians, because they follow a Saviour, who is divine. His obscurity is perspicuous ; his omissions are instructive.

To make the teaching of the Bible effectual, it is accompanied with the allurements of heaven ; with the warnings of hell ; with the blood of the Lamb ; with the influence of the Spirit, and with the interest of the soul, which must be ransomed by the Gospel or lost forever.

The Bible is valuable as a standard of truth—a test by which every doctrine is to be rejected or received. When the eye is blinded by the flare of the lamp, which the fallacious folly, or equally fallacious wisdom of man has lighted up, how delightful to look at the clear light of the sun ; to see it shedding a constant and powerful light on a path which was darkness before it arose, and will be darkness, should it ever go down. When some advocate of error has brought us his

plausible sophistry ; and wound the snares of his delusions around us so that we hardly know how to escape, how pleasant and how safe is it, to say "what is the doctrine of the Bible ? what says God ?" The word of God is incorruptible seed ; it liveth and abideth forever.

Truth is a line without an angle or a curve. But man has always been vibrating in his opinions. Even good men in every age have been partial in their views, and have embraced their favorite doctrines and duties to the exclusion of others, equally taught by revelation, and equally important. The current of doctrine in the visible church has always been winding from one extreme to another ; and truth itself has been so disturbed as to have almost the effect of absolute error. In one age nothing is taught but self-denial and mortification ; then a more indulgent scheme comes into repute. At one time nothing but the doctrine of faith alone is preached ; at another, good works are held up as auxiliary to salvation. Now all the force of sacred eloquence is directed to shew the sinner his dependance ; again the sinner is counted too passive, and proof is accumulated on proof to shew he is an agent and bound to repent and be active in believing. Thus the very spirit of the Gospel is narrowed to meet some immediate object which its biassed advocates have in view. But the Bible is the book of ages. It is the corrector of all error ; the teacher of all truth. These partial systems can no more be compared to its fulness, than a bottle of distilled essence to a forest of perfumes. It speaks to all generations, and it must be studied to give the christian character its just consistency.



But the Bible never appears more precious than when the mind is darkened by some acute controversy. We have objections and replies played off in opposition, like the flashing of the swords of two contending gladiators. We have a doctrine proved, we think, so as to defy all objection. But some opponent more learned or more subtle comes and overthrows it. Objection rises on objection, argument meets argument, the proofs multiply, and the darkness increases. The points at issue may be important, but the discussion fatigues the intellect and hardens the heart. We are perplexed ; we are distressed ; we turn away from human wisdom to the pure light of revelation—I *am* safe if I trust in God.

This sacred book records the promises which the christian believes. It presents him cordials for his darkest hours. When he surveys his feebleness and infirmities, his sins of omission and commission, his wandering thoughts and formal prayers ; when he reflects how much he merits punishment, and how he has no claim for future happiness, how cheering is it to know that God will never reject or forsake a contrite heart ! He promises to hear the humble prayer ; and to give the Holy Spirit to those that ask it of him. He promises to be present in an hour of temptation ; that nothing shall separate the believer from the love of Christ. The pages of the scriptures are crowded with many great and precious promises ; which, when read and believed, fill the soul with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

What but experience can describe the consolations, which the Bible pours upon the hours of adversity !

Man must suffer ; the world is fertile of sorrow ; crowds are disappointed of their aim in life ; and the rest are disappointed in success. Friends must part ; property can do but little to help us ; and sickness and sorrow wait to close the dreadful scene. Such, my fellow mortal, is your lot ; and before you lies the dark ocean of eternity, where you must launch away amidst billows, rocks, shipwreck and despair. O fearful condition ! O insensible heart ; if thou art not anxious for a refuge ! In the Bible God is revealed as a refuge ; one of the properties attributed to him is that he is a *very present help in time of trouble*. The Bible has cheered the poor man's hovel, dried the mourner's tear, supported the widow's heart, soothed the distracted conscience ; cheered the chamber of disease and softened the dying groan. Take one of its promises as a specimen ;—*All things shall work together for good to those who love God*. What powerful words to instil resignation and peace. There are times when the afflicted christian will feel that the Bible is all that is left—But it is enough.

But an objector may ask—has not this bright portrait many abatements ? The Bible speaks of hell ; of the sinner's guilt and the sinner's danger. Is this the book which is sweeter than honey and the honeycomb ? Who can read of a God judging the world, calling to remembrance all the minute actions and secret thoughts of men, pronouncing the sentence of his rigorous and impartial law, and condemning the impenitent to eternal flames, without regarding the book with terror which reveals these heart-crushing truths ? They may be necessary but they cannot be sweet. In

the Bible page after page is spent in threatening. In the Old Testament temporal evils are threatened to a particular people ; in the New, eternal perdition to all who despise or neglect the Gospel.—But these threatenings shew the compassion of God. He waves the rod, because he is unwilling to strike. His severest language bespeaks his mercy. If you were to see a guide-post with this inscription—*This road leadeth to a precipice*, you would not say the information was cruel, though it spoke of danger ; you would not condemn the author as unmerciful, though he might check the pleasures of your ride ; you would not burn the sign-board, that such a disagreeable subject might never meet the eye of another traveller ; but you would profit by the information, and bless the benevolent hand that had erected a forewarning of the danger. Hell is prepared to execute *hereafter* divine justice ; but *now* it is spoken of as a proof of divine mercy. The Bible speaks of Hell ; but from its dark regions and formidable fires, Dives still lifts up his voice and testifies to his brethren, *lest they also should come to this place of torment*. Yes, in Hell the very impious become preachers. The guilty dead of every age and every nation rise from their sepulchres and warn us, with wailing voice and gnashing teeth, of the hopeless horrors, which they must suffer and we may escape. Destruction itself has a saving sound. Hell as well as heaven evinces the love of God. The threatening makes not the danger, it urges your flight. It is the sentinel's gun, which breaks your slumber, and saves you from the foe.

There is an art, which we must all learn, of using

the Bible as the sailor uses his chart ; and although it will not settle every question by definite directions suited to every particular case, as books of casuistry vainly endeavor to do, yet its precepts are wonderfully applicable to all the perplexities of life. Endeavor to modulate your conduct by this book and see how readily it may be done. Before you resent an injury, study well this verse—*Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves but rather give place unto wrath ; for it is written, Vengeance is mine ; I will repay saith the Lord.* Before you engage in business, read another passage—*What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul ?* Before you swell with pride and glow with ambition—*Consider the Lord Jesus, who, though he was rich, yet for your sakes became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.* If you are tempted to intemperance, let Solomon advise you—*Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright ; at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.* If evil company invite you, mark the effect—*the companion of fools shall be destroyed.* If you are habitually neglecting any duty, read the words of James—*If any man keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.* If you are hoping for heaven while you are holding your sins—*be not deceived ; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God.* At the close of every day, ask, if any of the truths or precepts of the Bible have appeared in any of your words or deeds.



From this subject we may derive three important directions.

First—Never be offended with the preachers of the gospel for unfolding the Bible unto you. They are the ambassadors of God, and are bound to hear the word at his mouth, and give you warning from him. The Bible is a faithful book; and those who preach from it must be faithful to your souls. Perhaps you have sometimes gone from the sanctuary, cavilling, censuring the speaker; exasperated rather than reformed. But before you condemn another sermon, just give yourself time to compare it with the divine word. Beware lest, while you are condemning a man you be found fighting against God.

Secondly—Read your Bible—read it every day and lodge some of the most important passages in the memory. The time may come when a single passage of scripture will be of more importance to you than all other wisdom. It may prove a guide to a distracted heart.

Thirdly—Believe and obey the Bible. What makes it most sweet is the power of *converting the soul*. Without this, the book will increase your condemnation. The Bible calls you to repentance; to survey the Redeemer's death and taste the Redeemer's love. Without this last effect, it may enlarge your knowledge, but it will only increase your final misery.

A man's character is affected in religion according to the distance at which he places the Bible from himself; just as the earth is covered with snow or vegetation, according as the sun is on the tropic, or on the line. One man purchases a Bible; binds it with beau-

tiful morocco ; places it on his desk, and there it lies for years, unopened and unimproved. Another carries it in his pocket, and reads it to confirm a preconceived opinion, or to foster a disputatious spirit. A third commits it to memory, and quotes it to display his knowledge. A fourth binds it to his heart.

*Not catalogued*

## EXTRACT

FROM AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE MEETING OF

### THE A. B. SOCIETY,

MAY 11, 1827.

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By the REV. MR. YATES, *recently from Calcutta.*

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GREAT ends are often attained by simple means. This is particularly the case in the operations of the Divine Being. What can be more simple than the law of attraction, and yet by this law, the order and harmony of the spheres are secured, and the world on which we live is preserved. The method of seeking to draw and keep men near to God as their true centre, by means of the Bible, is a plan so simple and yet so efficacious, that it merits the appellation of divine. There is a fitness or adaptation in this word to produce every effect at which it aims. As light dispels darkness, so truth removes error; as seed produces its own proper fruit, so the word of God, the seed of eternal life, produces its own proper fruit, even the fruits of holiness in the hearts and lives of men.

It lays a solid foundation for their immortal hopes, in the incarnation, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ; it teaches them all they are to avoid, and all they are to perform; it presents them with the strongest motives to action, and supplies them with abundant consolation in suffering. Its suitableness will more strikingly appear, if we compare, or rather contrast it with other means that have been used by men.

I hold in my hand three books which have been regarded as Bibles in different parts of the world. The first is the Geeta, a shastra of the Hindoos, which is greatly admired by that numerous race of people. I have read and examined it with care, and can testify from such examination, that it is more calculated to promote the misery than the happiness of men. Here Vishnu is represented as teaching his disciple Arjun to enter on the murderous deeds of war, and as enforcing his exhortations by arguments which destroy all human responsibility, and beget in the soul a morbid indifference to the nearest and dearest connexions in life. Here the god represents himself as the author of those bloody deeds which have spread desolations over the face of the earth, and at the same time teaches that these lamentable scenes ought not to be regarded as a matter of lamentation by a wise and steady mind. Infidels in Europe used to fancy that something noble would be brought to light, when the ancient works of the Hindoos should be known; lo ! this is one of the greatest of those works, and how transcendently glorious does the Bible appear when contrasted with such a system !

The second of these books is the Desatir, or writings of the ancient Persian prophets. It ascribes some perfections to God worthy of his character, but it teaches to worship the heavenly constellations, to consider them as intelligent beings, and to use them as intercessors with God. It was probably through the influence of this system that the Magi, or wise men of the East, were led to observe and follow the star which conducted them to Bethlehem. Much, however, as it has been admired by sages, it contains no information



how a guilty sinner is to obtain pardon and eternal life.

The third book is the Koran, the bible of the Mus-sulmans. It is viewed as a divine revelation by as many persons as the Scriptures; and by the ornaments upon it, you may judge how greatly it is admired. Its doctrines have made innumerable proud Pharisees, but have never made one humble Publican. The best parts of it have been taken from the Old Testament; some of those which have not, are in direct opposition to the spirit of the Gospel. Christ has said, love your enemies; but the false Prophet says, kill them (i. e. the infidels) wherever you may find them: the objects most to be pitied are thus devoted to destruction. What comparison will such a sytem bear with the Gospel of Christ? After a careful examination, therefore, of all the books I have met with in the East, claiming to be revelations from God, I would in reference to them all, adopt the language of Dr. Watts—

Should all the forms that men devise,  
Assault my faith with treacherous art;  
I'd call them vanity and lies,  
And bind the Gospel to my heart.

It is a blessed consideration to us, that this best of all books is destined to supplant every pretended revelation, and to bring about that moral revolution in the world, so devoutly to be wished. We are confident of its success from what it has already accomplished, and from what God has promised that it shall effect. All other systems extend their influence only to the head, they never reach so far as to change the heart; but “the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to

the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” How great and happy have been the changes wrought by it in England and America! How many individuals have been advanced in the scale of being, and raised to become burning and shining lights in the church of Christ! How many villages, towns, and cities, once rude, and almost barbarous, have been enlightened and improved! How is it that England and America are so pre-eminently distinguished above the nations of the East? and how is it that their present condition is so superior to their past? Is it not because the Bible is more generally circulated and regarded?

The question then is whether that book which has produced so much good among us, will not produce equal good among others, if sent unto them? Unquestionably it will, and from its past, we may, with safety, argue its future success. It has now been translated into many of the Eastern languages, and though these translations have not been circulated so widely as could be wished, yet a happy commencement has been made. Many are now reading the wonderful works of God in their own language; in the native schools where the Scriptures were at first refused and rejected, they are now read without the smallest objection. In Calcutta there are now upwards of thirty native female schools, in most, if not all of which, suitable parts of the Scriptures are taught. The light is spreading in every direction: hundreds have seen the folly of idolatry, though they have not rejected it; many have rejected it, though they have not become

Christians ; some have become decided Christians, and are now spreading this book among their countrymen. Last year, by a native of some respectability in the suburbs of Calcutta, one of the idols was cast to the moles and the bats, and the temple in which it was worshipped, demolished. The leaven has begun to work, and it will operate till it has leavened the whole lump. From what has taken place we feel morally certain that the idols will all be famished, and that the word of the Lord will have free course, and run and be glorified.

We are not left to conjecture on this subject, we have a sure word of prophecy, unto which we shall do well to take heed ; and from it we learn that what we so ardently desire God has promised to perform. He has said, “as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater : so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth, and it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” What stronger pledge can be required for the success of this Society and the completion of its great designs ? The omnipotence and faithfulness of Jehovah stand engaged to make this sacred volume victorious over all opposition, and sooner shall heaven and earth pass away, than one jot or tittle of his word fall to the ground without receiving its full accomplishment. What greater encouragement can the friends of the Bible Society require to animate them in their exertions ? If then you have

any pity for those who are sitting in darkness and the shadow of death ; if you have any regard for the triumphs of truth, if you have any faith in the promises of God, “be ye stedfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”







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